

# DPW UPDATE

July 2002

## Steve Martin: Surveying San Diego

By Jessica Eslinger, Staff Writer

At 6:30 a.m. the sun has just risen, and many San Diegans are waking up, walking their dogs and reading the morning paper. But DPW Land Surveyor Steve Martin is already at work, greeting field crews and making sure they have all the appropriate equipment, documentation and survey maps for their destinations, before beginning his own strenuous workday.

Supporting field crews is only a small part of what Martin does for the County. He oversees the Calculation and Photogrammetry section in the field surveys office. The majority of his work is on capital improvement projects and pre-construction research and inspection of survey monuments. In other words, he builds topographic maps for County development projects.

Research is gathered through aerial photographs and technological survey instrument measurements. Martin then interprets the data, defining the landscape contours. This information serves as a blueprint for construction. He advises project managers where they can build, if there are any geographic challenges in the area, and what, if any, state restrictions apply to the project.

Two things Martin focuses on as office supervisor are quality and documentation. He records every step in the survey process to ensure accuracy before presenting projects to their corresponding managers. He also works with his staff to build summaries of the project criteria and actual project results.

“We have the field crew do a walk-through of the project with the draft map in hand on all of our mapping projects to make sure there are no errors or omissions,” said Martin.

Martin was key in establishing the County’s High Precision Geodetic Network, a global positioning system used to measure field location from satellite feed. He successfully learned how to manipulate data from the expensive equipment, providing him opportunities to work with Caltrans and scientists from Scripps Institute of Oceanography.

He began his career with the County in 1990 as a junior land surveyor. Within seven years, his attention to detail, problem solving capabilities and innovative ideas helped promote him directly to land surveyor position. Martin earned his associate degree in Land Surveying from Cuyamaca College and is licensed by the state as an official land surveyor.

What he enjoys most about his job is the respect he receives as a County surveyor.

“We are well regarded in the surveying community,” said Martin. “We have a reputation for knowing about special survey situations and doing a thorough job.”

With 12 years of surveying and technological experience, Martin is a key contact for surveyors and project managers throughout the County. He also serves as vice president of San Diego’s chapter of the California Land Surveyor Association.



## Record Crowd at Air Fair

P-51 Mustangs, an F/A-18 Hornet and A-1 Skyraider zoomed overhead with dozens of other aircraft as 36,000 people on the ground stood impressed with the show. The 8<sup>th</sup> Annual Ramona Air Fair drew a record crowd for the three-day event at the County-owned airport.



The event featured demonstrations by firefighting aircraft and ground forces and an open house at the aerial attack base. It also celebrated completion of a 1,000 foot runway extension that allows larger planes to take off with heavier loads to fight fires throughout San Diego County.

Displays included historic, antique and home-built airplanes, food booths and more. DPW's Recycling section and Airports also displayed information to fair visitors.

### *Crowd checks out F/A-18*

## Preventing Slips, Trips, and Falls

*By Jack Thompson, Safety Officer*

Did you know that slips, trips, and falls are second only to automobile accidents in causing personal injury? On stairways alone, falls result in almost two million disabling injuries yearly. There are thousands more minor injuries caused by slips, trips, and falls. Most alarming of all is the fact that industrial falls cause more than 1,000 deaths each year.

**SLIPS** occur when there is too little friction between a person's feet and the walking surface. Many factors can cause a slip. Ice, oil, water, cleaning fluids, and other slippery substances are the most obvious causes. However, the flooring may be slick or the person who slips may not be wearing proper shoes. To prevent slips, avoid walking in areas that pose slipping hazards if at all possible. Always clean up spills of slippery substances promptly. Better yet, prevent the spills in the first place. If an area is a chronic problem, re-route foot traffic to avoid it. If flooring is a problem, replace it or coat it with a non-slip surfacing material.

**TRIPS** occur when a person contacts an object and is thrown off balance. The main cause of tripping is obvious--anytime an object is in a walkway it could cause someone to trip. Another culprit is an object projecting into the walkway--material stored low on a shelf. Poor lighting and uneven walking surfaces also cause tripping. Prevention is simple but does require diligence. Keep objects that could cause someone to trip out of the way. Repair uneven flooring and install proper lighting if required. Slips and trips frequently result in a fall.

**FALLS** also occur for other reasons, such as improper use of ladders and scaffolding or not using fall protection equipment. Don't risk serious injury by taking shortcuts. If you are working on a ladder, scaffold, or other elevated platform, know the requirements for using it safely. Always use fall protection equipment when it is required.

Slips, trips, and falls cause numerous injuries every day. But they are among the easiest hazards to correct. Take the time to look around your worksite for these hazards and work to prevent them. Take care not to cause any slip, trip, or fall hazards as you go about your daily activities. Don't let a slip, trip, or fall keep you from enjoying all that life has to offer.

## Division News

### Land Development

#### Life of a Plan Checker: Georges Elkassis

*By Jessica Eslinger, Staff Writer*

Dozens of maps, reports, plans and permits fill Georges Elkassis' cubicle.

The Senior Civil Engineer has spent over 15 years with the County. He began as a volunteer civil engineer, preparing hydrology reports and assisting in the development of a levee. Now, after having worked in several DPW sections under half a dozen different titles, Elkassis is in charge of plan checking County and private development projects through the Land Development review process.

With a staff of four, he follows projects from their initial planning phases to their final approval stages. Every day he meets with developers and private civil engineers to coordinate land development, to meet drainage and traffic design requirements as specified by state and federal laws, and to discuss design costs.

Although he's happy to provide guidance and technical expertise for his DPW and professional colleagues, he knows helping the public is the most important thing.

"It's in the County standards," he said, "and I like my job."

Originally from Lebanon, Elkassis came to America as a student in 1979. He has since earned his bachelor's of science degree in civil engineering and a master's degree in management and organizational development from the United States International University. He also has a master's degree in civil engineering from the former Institute of Technology in New York.



### Transportation

#### New faces at Traffic: Mike Robinson and Hank Morris



Mike Robinson comes from high volume, low speed. Hank Morris comes from high volume, high speed. Both will be working mostly with low volume, high speed.

Simply put, Robinson worked with one kind of traffic with the City of Poway and Morris with another kind at Caltrans. Both are now with DPW's Traffic section.

Robinson manages Traffic and Loss Mitigation, replacing the retired Bob Brown. Morris is the department's traffic engineer. They have similar reasons for accepting

their new positions.

"I needed new challenges," Robinson said. "My background is in urban traffic and I want to take on rural aspects as well. And with Hank coming aboard, I'll have a quality person in a key position."

Morris worked with rural state highways in San Diego and Imperial counties while with Caltrans. "I have experience working with communities in this area and am really looking forward doing good things for the County."

## Transit Says “Goodbye” to DPW

Passengers probably didn’t notice that as of June 29, the East County Suburban, Express, Poway or Rural buses they ride are part of the Metropolitan Transit Development Board (MTDB) rather than County Transit Services (CTS). That’s the day CTS turned over control of its routes to MTDB.

The move was made to improve regional transportation and planning services by placing them under control of an organization whose core function is to provide transit. Route numbers, bus stops and schedules will remain the same.



Since 1975, CTS operated the Rural Bus system that carries passengers from remote eastern and northern parts of the County. In 1979, CTS services expanded to include Poway buses, the Express Bus system that runs from Escondido to downtown San Diego along the I-15 corridor, and East County Suburban routes in the cities of El Cajon, La Mesa, Lemon Grove, Poway, Santee and the communities of Spring Valley, Casa de Oro, Rancho San Diego, Lakeside and Alpine. Last year CTS buses carried 5 million passengers. CTS also operated Paratransit, Flex Route and Dial-A-Ride services in several County areas. Many staffers have already moved to new offices at MTDB in Trolley Towers. Erla Denney, transferred from CTS senior clerk to the senior clerk position in DPW Financial Services.